

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR UN GA KS KN

SUBJ: BURMESE POSITION ON KOREA AT 30TH GA

REF: STATE 229632

SUMMARY: GUB MAY HAVE DECIDED, PERHAPS IN LATE JUNE, TO MOVE FROM ITS CUSTOMARY CATATONIC NEUTRALISM CLOSER TO THE "THIRD-WORLD" VARIETY OF NON-ALIGNMENT. AT ANY RATE, IT NOW SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT GUB WILL VOTE FOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION ON KOREA. HOWEVER, U.S. AND FRIENDLY REPRESENTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND RANGOON, AND THE LOGIC OF THE SECRETARY'S SEPTEMBER 22 SPEECH, APPEAR AT LEAST TO HAVE MADE THE GUB MORE EQUIVOCAL ABOUT ITS INTENTIONS; IF THERE WERE FACE-SAVING WAY TO DO SO, E.G., A MOTION TO SHELVE, A COMPROMISE "MARRIAGE" OF RESOLUTIONS, ETC., THE GUB MIGHT CONCEIVABLY SHIFT TO ABSTENTION. A RESPONSIBLE MFA OFFICIAL SAYS FOREIGN MINISTER U HLA PHONE HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO MAKE THE SHIFT. END SUMMARY.

1. RE-READING THE TEA LEAVES THAT ACCUMULATED DURING MY ABSENCE ON HOME LEAVE, I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS AN UPPER-LEVEL GUB DECISION, PERHAPS IN JUNE, TO MOVE AWAY FROM BURMA'S ULTRA-NEUTRALIST "FOURTH WORLD" POSITION TOWARD THE NON-ALIGNED "THIRD
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WORLD." A WIDELY-NOTED COMMENT BY NE WIN AT THE JUNE 23 MEETING

OF THE BSPP CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE BSPP IS NOT AN ANTI-COMMUNIST PARTY, THOUGH INNOCUOUS ON ITS FACE, MAY HAVE REFLECTED SOME RESTUDY OF THE GUB'S IDEOLOGICAL POSITION. FOREIGN MINISTER U HLA PHONE'S TRIP TO PEKING AND HIS PRO-THIRD-WORLD POSTURE AT THE LIMA CONFERENCE IN AUGUST, AND NE WIN'S PLANS (STILL UNANNOUNCED) TO VISIT PEKING IN NOVEMBER WERE FURTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF BURMA'S SHIFT. CONSISTENT WITH THESE EVENTS, AT LEAST A TENTATIVE DECISION WAS MADE TO VOTE FOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION ON KOREA AT THE UNGA, AND WAS REFLECTED IN EQUIVOCAL RESPONSES TO SOUNDINGS BY THE US, ROK, AND OTHER FRIENDLY REPRESENTATIVES.

2. BY NORMAL LOGIC, THE TENTATIVE GUB DECISION TO SUPPORT THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION LOOKS VERY HARD TO SHAKE. OUR HARDEST INTELLIGENCE STILL POINTS THAT WAY. ESPECIALLY WITH NE WIN VISITING PEKING (NOT TO MENTION A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE JOURNEY TO PYONGYANG), HIS INCLINATION TO PLEASE HIS PROSPECTIVE HOSTS MUST BE VERY COMPELLING. PARTICULARLY IF THE GUB REGARDED ITS VOTE AS A SPECIFIC QUID-PRO-QUO TO GET PEKING TO STOP SUPPORTING THE BCP, A GUB SHIFT BACK TO ABSTENTION ON THE KOREA RESOLUTION COULD VIRTUALLY BE RULED OUT. OBVIOUSLY, IF THE GUB THOUGHT IT COULD ELIMINATE THE BCP INSURGENCY BY A YES VOTE, IT COULD HARDLY HESITATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE SOME SLENDER GROUNDS, IF NOT FOR OPTIMISM, AT LEAST FOR CONTINUED EFFORT. RATHER THAN A SPECIFIC QUID-PRO-QUO, I AM INCLINED TO REGARD THE GUB TENTATIVE VOTE DECISION AS SIMPLY ONE PART OF A GENERALIZED RESPONSE TO THE NEW SITUATION IN SEA, AND MAYBE NOT UNALTERABLE.

3. AT ANY RATE, A NUMBER OF BURMESE OFFICIALS INCLUDING MAUNG MAUNG GYEE, DIRECTOR OF THE RESPONSIBLE DIVISION OF THE MFA, HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING JAPANESE AMBASSADOR ARITA (WITH WHOM WE HAVE WORKED CLOSELY ON THIS ISSUE) THAT THERE IS STILL A GOOD CHANCE OF THE GUB'S ABSTAINING. MAUNG MAUNG GYEE, A CAPABLE AND RELIABLE OFFICIAL, TOLD ARITA FRIDAY, THE DAY BEFORE FOREIGN MINISTER HLA PHONE'S DEPARTURE, THAT HLA PHONE HAD BEEN GIVEN FINAL DISCRETION TO VOTE EITHER WAY, DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SESSION. ARITA STRESSED TO MAUNG MAUNG GYEE THE FLEXIBILITY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE U.S. POSITION AS EXPRESSED IN THE SECRETARY'S SEPTEMBER 22 SPEECH, AND MAUNG MAUNG GYEE APPEARED TO AGREE.

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4. I RECOMMEND THAT HLA PHONE AND THE BURMESE DELEGATION IN NEW YORK BE APPROACHED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ABSTENTION IS STILL AN OPEN POSSIBILITY; TACTICS SHOULD BE CLOSELY COORDINATED WITH THE JAPANESE. IF HLA PHONE DOES HAVE FINAL DISCRETION HE WOULD PROBABLY WITHHOLD SUPPORT FROM THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION ONLY IF SOME NEW COMPROMISE ALTERNATIVE WERE PUT FORWARD. THE BURMESE ARE COMMITTED TO OPPOSING CONTINUED PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES ABROAD; HOWEVER, THEY ARE FOR INCLUSION OF THE ROKG IN NEGOTIATIONS. IF

THE COMPROMISE ALTERNATIVE PROVIDED AN OBVIOUS EXCUSE FOR THE BURMESE TO MAKE PLAIN THIS KIND OF AMBIVALENCE AS AN EXCUSE FOR ABSTAINING, IT WOULD BE MOST ATTRACTIVE TO THEM.

5. I SEE NO REALISTIC WAY OF INFLUENCING THE BURMESE VOTE BY FURTHER PERSUASION AT THIS END, LEAST OF ALL BY APPLICATION OF "LEVERAGE". OUR REPRESENTATIONS HERE VIA THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAVE BEEN STRONGLY SUPPORTED NOT ONLY BY THE JAPANESE BUT BY THE U.K., FRG, AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES AS WELL, WITH RESULTS THAT WERE (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE JAPANESE, AS NOTED ABOVE) EQUIVOCAL AT BEST. I, OF COURSE, CONTEMPLATED RAISING THE MATTER WITH COLONEL TIN OO, OUR HIGHEST POINT OF CONTACT ON NARCOTICS MATTERS. HOWEVER, TO RAISE KOREA IN THAT CHANNEL WOULD INEVITABLY SUGGEST THAT WE MIGHT BE CONDITIONING OUR NARCOTICS COOPERATION ON THEIR VOTE. THIS WOULD ONLY STIFFEN THEIR BACKS; AND IF, IN THE END, THE GUB VOTED FOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION, WE WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BACKING DOWN, WITH THE ATTENDANT LOSS OF CREDIBILITY, OR RISK DAMAGING A PROGRAM THAT IS VERY MUCH IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST. AS TO OUR TINY EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM, IT JUST DOES NOT CARRY THAT MUCH WEIGHT. POSSIBLE FUTURE U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (IBRD/IMF CONSORTIUM, PL-480) IS TOO TENUOUS TO REPRESENT ANY MEANINGFUL LEVERAGE AT THIS TIME.

6. IN SUM, WHATEVER POSSIBILITY MAY REMAIN OF GETTING THE GUB TO ABSTAIN SHOULD BE PURSUED IN NEW YORK. IT IS A SLIM CHANCE, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY THE EFFORT. ON OUR END, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR SITUATION AND REITERATE OUR POSITION AS APPROPRIATE.
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